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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5217
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RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
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SENSITIVE
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SUBJECT: SUPREME COURT RULING ON PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
IMMINENT

REF: KINSHASA 1777

¶11. (U) The DRC Supreme Court, after its deliberations were disrupted by violence at the Court on November 21 (reftel), resumed hearing arguments November 24 and 25 on Jean-Pierre Bemba's electoral challenge, and resumed reviewing the provisional presidential election results announced on November 15. The Court is expected to render its decision imminently, probably late in the day on November 27.

¶12. (SBU) Since the fire which damaged the courthouse (reftel), the Supreme Court has been meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under heavy security. The court proceedings have also been interrupted by various displays arising from Bemba's legal team. Two walk-outs were staged on November 25 by Bemba's MLC lawyers, one for an alleged inability to express themselves fully, and the second because the lawyers had not had time to eat and additionally claimed concern for their personal safety as night fell. Although the Court warned the MLC attorneys that they were abandoning their final opportunity to participate in the arguments, the attorneys left the deliberations several hours before arguments concluded.

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